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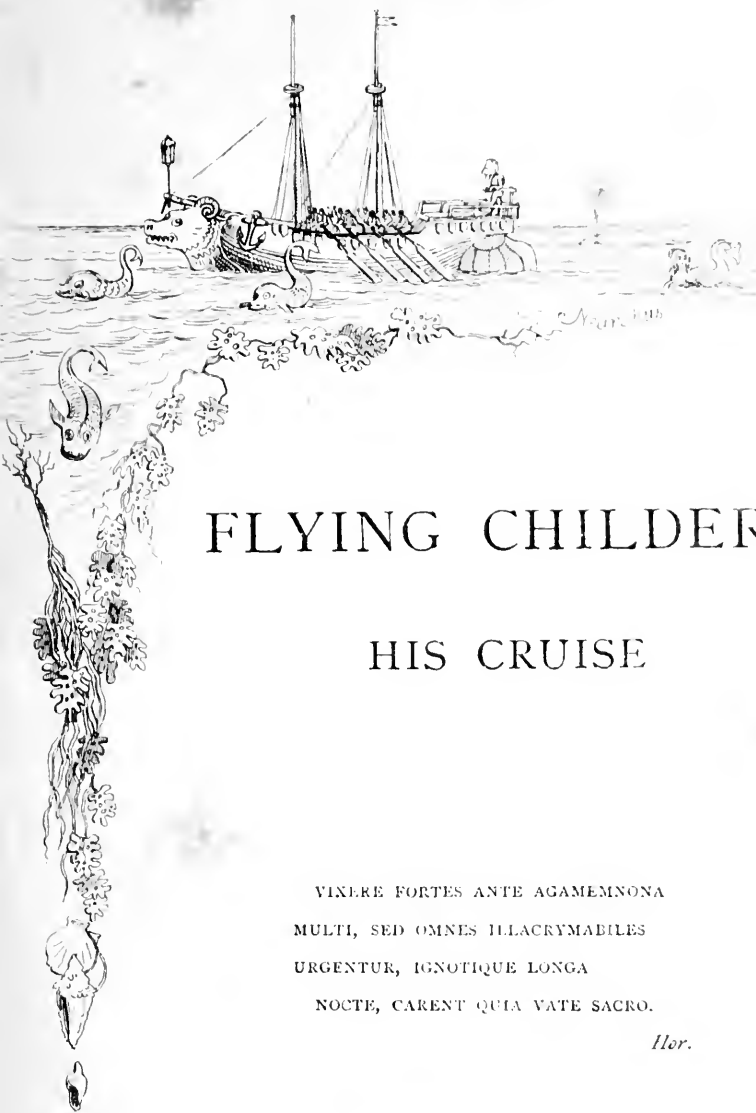
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FLYING CHILDERS

HIS CRUISE

VIXERE FORTES ANTE AGAMEMNONA
MULTI, SED OMNES ILLACRYMABILES
URGENTUR, IGNOTIQUE LONGA
NOCTE, CARENT QUIA VATE SACRO.

Hic.



FLYING CHILDERS

HIS CRUISE.

"VIXERE FORTES ANTE AGAMEMNONA
MULTI, SED OMNES ILLACRYMABILES
URGENTUR, IGNOTIQUE LONGA NOCTE
CARENT QUIA VATE SACRO."

HOR.

BY

THE EARL OF WINCHILSEA.

LONDON :

(FOR THE AUTHOR.)

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, 74 & 75, PICCADILLY.

1870.

LONDON :
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P R E F A C E.

IN these prodigious times when everything
Figures revers'd, from Journalist to King,
When every power, from Emperor to Pope,
Cries out for what will hang 'em all—' more rope !'
When freaks as senseless as the world e'er saw
(Beyond the reach of wit, and rule, and law,)
Like Egypt's hailstones in great storms descend—
Till wisdom breathless asks—where will it end ?
When ' Peace at all price ' is the cry of some,
And ' Mutual Trust ' and ' Faith's Millennium,'

While others sallying from the frozen North
With ‘Thor’s own Hammer’ in their hands burst
forth ;—

When wars and horrid rumours load the sky,
And ‘States of Siege’ make game of Liberty ;
When every landmark is by force displac’d,
And wise old saws are utterly disgrac’d ;—
When knaves on thrones, on horseback beggars sit,
Alike conspicuous for their want of wit ;
When Free Assemblies torn by Party strife,
Clutch at the shadow to forget the life,
The life of nations—that means more no doubt
Than ‘this Fool in a place and t’other out ;’
When every righteous tie that binds a man,
And every law since this strange world began,
Cut down like corn before the sickle, pales—
And all their cunning earth’s chief masters fails ;
While looking on sits England’s palsied form,
That mocks at Fate, and gibbers in the storm ;—

Shall I not lift my voice ? If men were dumb,
The very stones would raise a threat'ning hum !
The very ghosts of those who whilom bore
Britannia's banner safe from shore to shore,
Would burst the tomb, and gathering on the
brink,

Mock at their puny sons who pause to think !

Ye reckless change-mongers who deem it praise
To leave the straight and follow crooked ways !
Whose song must ever end as it begun,
In prophecies of Peace where Peace is none—
Behold your handiwork !—nay more, behold
The robber gloating o'er your cherish'd gold !
Into the tottering scale his sword he flings—
Another lesson on the faith of kings—
Another warning to the fools that doat—
Another crime for history to quote :
For, wolf at heart, when passion blows the flame,
Savage or civiliz'd, man's still the same

And what brought England to this rueful plight?
So ready once in a good cause to fight?
Insensate blindness, and the cuckoo cry
For Peace disarm'd, and mad Economy!
With everything to lose and nought to gain,
The prudent few lifted their voice in vain!
When to destruction in great mobs men run,
Who shall arrest the wild stampedo? None!
Behold your work—Philanthropy! and then
Smile, if you can, ye 'Peace at all price' men!
'Twas by your arts, your din from day to day,
You stole the wits of Englishmen away;
Pull'd down our trusty bulwarks stone by stone,
And left us powerless, friendless, and alone.

The days were once when England's word could
give
Strength to the Slave, and bid the hopeless live;
From wasted limbs the shacklebolts withdraw,
The lamp of Freedom, and the Queen of Law—

But times are changed ; the dreary lust of pelf
Blinds her old eyes to aught but dirty self :
Astonished nations with the tidings ring,
And see a pedler where they hail'd a king.
And now—God wot—but how shall I forecast
The dismal weird that mutters in the blast ?
Driven from her stormy empire on the main,
England may drag, perhaps may hug a chain ;—
And why ? Because like other wittols born,
'The sword she drew not ere she blew the
horn.'

So long as man shall breathe the breath of life,
So long as differences shall end in strife,
So long as Diplomats in conjuring caps
Shall bluster, threaten, and at last collapse,
So long as right shall be the butt of scorn,
When once the conquering sword be fairly drawn,
So long as Optimists shall rule the State,
Nations must start up from their dreams too late,

Surprised, bewildered, in their homes to feel
That empty words can never match with steel.

You curst empirics who with one vile pill
Cure States like country louts of every ill,
Whose nauseous drugs by cunning gilded o'er,
For all their tinsel promise stink the more ;
Now strength, position, prestige, all are gone,
And to the gulf we all have stumbled on,
Too proud to hesitate, too dull to learn—
To you the country shall in vengeance turn !
With all your fulsome talk, and feckless hands,
Alone, before the world disarm'd she stands.
And shall we mend the failures all admit
By Cardwell's wisdom, or by Childers' wit ?
Shall the bewilder'd country tamely note
The silly pranks of charlatans afloat ?
While one our army, one our navy guide
By rules the jest of all the world beside !

No, not though Gladstone, from ‘His Gods’* re-
turning,
Should take to fiddling while our London’s
burning ;
Or Lowe compute, in weighty words and grave,
By non-resistance what vast sums we save.
But is there time? Oh, if there be, start up,
Ye latent wise, ere Heav’n o’erbrim the cup !
Cast to the wind these cankers of the State,
Whose shibboleth is weakness, death, and fate ;
Whose instincts, innocent of sense and tact,
Collapse in trifles when they’re call’d to act.
Return to men whose policy displays
Some faint resemblance to our elder ways,
And let one great alarm-cry rend the air—
England, besotted and befool’d, prepare !

* See “*Juventus Mundi.*”

FYTTE Y^E FIRST.

Y^E START.

FYTTE Y^E FIRST.

Y^E START.

I.

“ BRING me forth the royal banner
That hath never mock'd the breeze !
I Lord Childers, hight ‘ the Flying,’
Will disport me on the seas !
Tritons, minnows, dolphins, mermaids,
Everything that haunts the wave,
Fall into your ranks behind me ;
And look sharp how you behave !

II.

“I am he, the potent ‘Ego!’

Lord High Admiral, by thunder,
Tars attend! when I to sea go,
By my faith, the world shall wonder.
Let me see one daring sailor
In his tarry breeches sneer;
And as sure as I am Childers,
By this hand, I’ll stop his beer!

III.

“Stop his grog, or with five portions
Of salt water drench it well:—
Scour the deck with violet powder—
See that ye abate each smell!
Let the adm’rals line the gangway;
Send the captains up aloft;
Man my barge with first lieutenants;—
Trow ye that your lord is soft?

IV.

“ Back the topsails ; fill the main-sheets ;
 He’s afloat that none shall cozen ;
Fire a hundred guns in salvo ;
 Give the starboard watch ‘ two dozen !’
Muster ev’ry hand before me ;
 Wielders of the sword and pen,
Wave Britannia’s standard o’er me !
 Now look out for squalls, my men !

V.

“ Furnish’d with my own Reporter,
 I am come amongst my crews ;
Nothing shall escape my notice,
 To the very oaths they use.
What man dare, my loyal shipmates,
 In a brace of shakes I’ll do’t !
Midship-mites avast there tittering !
 You loblolly boys be mute !

VI.

“ Look into my larboard ogle,
See'st thou, fellow, aught of green ?
Aught that in the days of jobbing,
In the Tory Board was seen ?
Doth this smack of stores old-fashion'd
Rotting where they never ought ?
No, I'll sell and pass to credit
All my predecessors bought !

VII.

“ Never since old Father Neptune
First saw Captain Jason's crew
Staggering to the land of Colchis—
Sick at heart and stomach too—
Has so valiant a commander
Left Britannia's shores, or Greece's,
In the search of gold to fleece, or
In the search for ' golden fleeces.'

VIII.

“ Fire the gun at blackest midnight !
Fly ‘ Blue Peter ’ at the fore !
Give the Fleet another minute !
Steam up, there ! we’re off at score !
Let me see some captain fellow
My sublime designs gainsay,
And I’ll munch him, and I’ll scrunch him,
As a donkey cheweth hay !

IX.

“ Think ye, those poor fools Columbus,
Raleigh, Captain Cook, or Drake,
Knew the half that I’ve forgotten,
Or one half as wisely spake ?
Think ye Blake a prettier sailor,
Nelson’s self a pluckier dog ?
But for several years, through envy,
All my gifts were lost in fog.

X.

“I was visiting Australia,
Studying Aborigines,
Noting Tory jobs and failures,
Eating junk in many seas.
Worthing Sir John Hay ‘The Hammerer,’*
Giving falls to Elphinstone,
Crushing jobbing, prying, spying
In the Dockyards, all alone.

XI.

“For at my strange birth presided
Thetis and fair Amphitrite,
I was cradled upon ocean
In a memorable night.

* Thor was called “The Hammerer.”

Mingled with my squalls infantine
Came the black squall charged with fear ;
Stormy times mayhap betok'ning,
But a very grand career !

XII.

“ Many a time I’ve box’d the compass,
Thinking upon Heroes dead,
Jason’s cruise—Ulysses’ wanderings—
Hanno’s* voyage with marvels fed !
From the ‘ Periplus of Arrian’
To the ‘ Flying Dutchman’s’ story,
Everything has helped the ladder
That has lifted me to glory.

* Hanno was the first discoverer of Gorillas.

XIII.

“ From the log of Captain Noah
 To the little ‘ Rob Roy’s cruise,’
Nothing has escaped my notice
 That can ever be of use.
And I’ve got it all as pat as
 Mr. Ayrton has good taste ;
And I never see a dockyard,
 But I moralize on waste.

XIV.

“ Waste is old, and Want’s her sister !
 Something’s new beneath the sun !
What was ‘ four men’s work’ before me,
 I’ll have better done by one.
Admirals shall be shelved and shunted,
 Captains shall be superseded,
First lieutenants be black-listed,—
 If mine orders be not heeded !”

xv.

So to sea went ‘Flying Childers,’
With his ironclads so gay,
And some sixty hours found him
Rolling deep in vile Biscay,
With a ‘snorter from the westward’
Rattling through his iron shrouds,
And his fleet hove head to wind, and
Several very nasty clouds.

xvi.

Then he call’d his valiant captains,
And said he—“Attend, my friends!
None can say, not even Childers,
How a gale of this sort ends.
Broad upon our larboard quarter
Lies the Tagus’ yellow flow,
With its oranges and port wine—
Thither, thither let us go.

XVII.

“ For although my friend ‘ the Dutchman’
Whilom in the wind’s eye sailed,
I should say, when he was captain,
Very different winds prevailed.
Therefore—‘ absit omen lævum’—
Let us in this instance run !
We’ll manœuvre somewhat later—
For our cruise is just begun.”

XVIII.

Upon this he fetch’d some lee-way,
And his stalwart legs just then
Not being steady in a sea-way,
Down he fell amongst his men.
Then said they—“ Good Lord High Admiral !
Thou hast but to give thine orders,
And we’ll follow thee to glory,
From full admirals to boarders !”

XIX.

Thus with royal standard flying,
Unto Lisbon steer'd the chief,
And the smell of orange blossoms
Brought his stomach quick relief ;
And Don Louis of Braganza,
With his cock'd hat in his hand,
In the twinkling of a stanza
To receive him took his stand.

XX.

And some thousand Lusitanians,
Duly wash'd for this occasion,
With brown skins and flashing glances,
Smil'd the welcome of the nation :—
“ Happy Lord High Admiral Childers !
What lay lord so blest as thee
Ever bore Britannia's banner
In such triumph on the sea ?”

XXI.

Thus it was they sung in numbers,
Very rough indeed ; but then
' A la mode de Lusitania,'
They embrac'd him and his men :
Brought him oranges and port wine,
Gave him a complete reception,
So his ' own Reporter' mentions,
In which there was ' no deception.'

XXII.

Tir'd at last of peaceful conquests,
Dinners, balls, and deputations,
Having finish'd his own business,
He bethinks him of the nation's.
For, says he—" There lurks a dragon
Envyng heroes in possession,
In that tiresome House of Commons—
I shall hear of this next session."

XXIII.

Then he shook like angry lion
 From his shapely limbs the sloth,
 And sent up again ‘Blue Peter’
 To a fleet in no ways loth.
 And he signall’d to his captains,
 Quite forgetting his last qualm,
 “England’s eye is full upon us,
 Let us look out for a storm.”

XXIV.

Many an eye was dimm’d with weeping,
 Many a heart sick to the core,
 When the fleet in silence sweeping
 Left the Lusitanian shore ;
 And Don Louis of Braganza,
 England’s very best ally,
 Said—“He’s greater than ‘De Gama!’
 And, moreover, he’s not shy!”

FYTTE Y^E SECOND.

Y^E FAIR WEATHER.

FYTTE Y^E SECOND.

Y^E FAIR WEATHER.

I.

“SMARTLY there, my noble captains !
Business is the Childers’ motto ;
Write it home to your belongings
In the envelopes of ‘Gotto !’*
Cull the choicest reams of ‘Parkins !’
Telegraph it, an ye list !
Smart we’ll be !—I’ll have no shirkings—
Lubbers all shall be dismist.

* See Parkins and Gotto’s advertisements.

II.

“ Gallant Captain, thou the favour’d,
After a prodigious sort,
Bearer of the flag of Childers
On the stately Agincourt !
I’m determin’d to astonish
All the lay and naval lords,
Showing fleets can be manœuvred
In a series of sternboards.

III.

“ But should aught untoward happen,
(Stow your talk, you giggling schelm !)
As it will in these long sea-ways,
I myself will take the helm !
Then I’ll show you, like Ulysses,
How to steer, and how to lie !—
Signal now to every captain,
‘ Open wide your weather eye !’

IV.

“ I will ape the stately wild goose,
And whatever winds prevail,
Fair or foul, or rain or sunshine,
In the Cuneus will I sail.
I will be its noble ‘apex,’
And whatever chance may hap,
Let no distance be diminished!—
Woe to him who leaves a gap!

V.

“ No excuse will pass with Childers;
Taut as bowline will he hold
His whole fleet in hand together,
Stout as steel, and true as gold.
He will show you, in new fashion,
How to ‘wear’ and how to ‘stay,’
He will show you how to weather
On the fam’d ‘Cape Flyaway.’

VI.

“ How to take the true meridian
After a strong ‘ B. and S.,’*
How to get the fleet, God willing,
Into every sort of mess.
How to make the ‘ Flying Dutchman,’
Our heroic sailors’ model,
With some things he will not mention,
Just conceived within his noddle.

VII.

“ Then, my gallant friends, look to it !
Be, I pray you, smart and spry !
Should I meet this valiant Dutchman,
We will sail in company.

* Initials for a glass of brandy and soda or seltzer.

By my faith, we'll cruise together,
Let tornadoes do their worst,
I know how to place the parties,
Dutchman second, Childers first !"

VIII.

Then to sea went ' Flying Childers,'
Leading in the Agincourt ;
And his captains followed after,
As they might, to see the sport :
And some rascally reporters,
Not the Lord High Admiral's own,
Wrote absurdities to London,—
Fictions all, as well 'tis known.

IX.

And they said,—“ His valiant captains
Did with one consent agree,
Childers was the greatest failure
That they'd ever known at sea.”

And they scoff'd and said,—“ The service
Never was in such a fix,
Since Jehoshaphat's fleet was broke at
Ezion-Geber by such tricks.”

X.

And they wondered,—“ If the country,
Like to Issachar's strong ass
Couching down between two burthens,
Would allow such freaks to pass.”
And they said,—“ Are English sailors
By such masters to be schooled ?
And the country that adores them,
After this droll fashion fooled ? ”

XI.

Knaves irreverent ! idle scoffers !
Know ye not avenging Time
Will strip bare your lying statements,
And turn every word to crime ?

When to port comes ‘ Flying Childers,’
And uprising in his place
In the mute admiring Commons,
Meets the envious face to face !

XII.

In the Cuneus, still advancing
To Gibraltar, sailed the chief ;
And arriv’d, good luck permitting,
Without any special grief.
As the warrior rock of Taric
Open’d on his larboard bow,
He beheld, with standards flying,
A most gallant sight, I trow.

XIII.

With yards mann’d, and all ‘ ataunto,’
Moor’d across the famous bay,
Wasting many pounds of powder—
England’s wooden squadron lay.

Warden, Oak, and Caledonia,
Consort, Pallas, Enterprise,
Cruiser, Psyche,—walls of England
Reckon'd a prodigious size,

XIV.

In the days when oak was regnant,
Ere the blacksmith on his mettle,
Had shut up the British sailor
In a shot-proof tower and kettle.
There they lay, to give the lie to
All those noodles who pretend
“ England means to make a present
Of ‘ her Rock ’ to Spain, her friend.”

XV.

Then he took his speaking trumpet,
And sung out in accents grand—
“ For the first time wood and iron
Meet under my high command !

Welcome, good Sir Alexander !*
What news of the smart Maltese ?
Now report yourself as ‘second,’
At head-quarters, if you please !”

XVI.

So with that he came to anchor ;
And his iron squadron lay,
Like the wooden one before him,
Moor’d in Algesiras Bay.
Agincourt, and Minotaur, and
Hercules, Northumberland,
Monarch, too, and Billy-rough-one,†
With th’ Inconstant nigh at hand.

* Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, &c. &c., in command of the Mediterranean squadron.

† Sailors’ pet name for the Bellerophon.

XVII.

Spanish echoes caught the frenzy,
And took up the British cheer ;
And the oldest ape that lives on
Calpe's rock pull'd faces queer :
What he thought of all this rumpus
I am not in case to tell ;
But I rather think he grumbled,
“ Who is this new naval swell ?”

XVIII.

Now descends Sir Richard Airey
From his fortress to the strand,
And he welcomes ‘ Flying Childers’
Warmly to the Smugglers’ Land.
And he says—“ A little dinner,
With a very savoury joint,
Noble High ! awaits your eating,
At yon cottage by the Point.

XIX.

“ May I beg that with your Captains
You will honour Richard Airey,
Should perchance your high engagements
Not oblige to the ‘contrairey.’
Seamen’s toils are best forgotten
In a jolly cruise ashore ;
We have kill’d the fatted calf, and
Eke the Mauritanian boar.

XX.

“ We have driv’n the skirts of Atlas
For the stag on which you’ll dine,—
Welcome, then, like great Æneas,
To our venison and ‘old wine !’* ”

* “ Impletur veteris Bacchi, pinguisque ferinæ.”

Æncidos.

Red-legg'd partridges in coveys,
Fell to our unerring guns !
Snipes, and wild ducks, hares, and plovers,
Very fine full-flavour'd ones.

XXI.

“ We have drawn the bay for mullet,
Early have we toil'd and late,
In the prospect of your coming—
And in fine—we dine at eight !”
Then said Childers, “ Good Sir Richard,
All that thou hast done is good,
And I feel my soul reviving
At the mention of such food.

XXII.

“ With my gallant tars around me,
At eight sharp will I attend ;
Lucky was it that you found me,
This is what I call a ‘ friend !”

Round thy festive board this evening
We'll forget, as best we may,
All the cankering cares of office,
And the 'rollers' of Biscay."

FYTTÉ Y^E THIRÐ.

Y^E STORM.

FYTTE Y^E THIRD.

Y^E STORM.

I.

GOOD-BYE, Calpe and Abyla,
Somewhat baldly call'd Apes' Hill !
Good-bye, splendid old traditions !
Would that ye rul'd England still.
Rooke and Elliot—hearts undaunted—
Tell the fools by nought alarm'd,
Tell the Quakers of your country,
“ Better die, than live disarm'd.”

II.

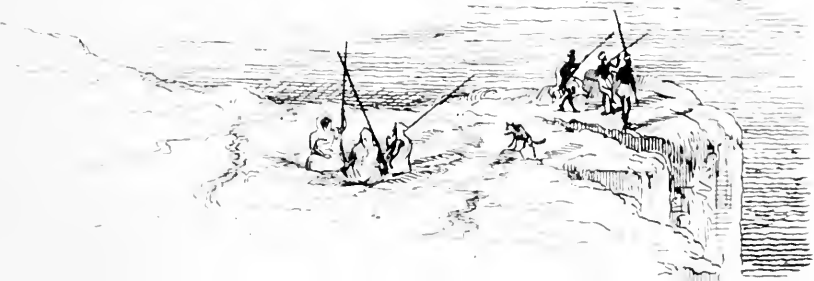
Tell them in the words of Solon
To the Lydian king addressed :—
“ Show me not thy wealth, good fellow !
He takes all whose steel's the best.
Diamond, ruby, pearl, and emerald,
Precious casket, golden chalice,
Are the strong man's—just so long as
He in arms doth keep his palace !”

III.

Woe to those foolhardy nations
That prefer dull talk to iron !
Woe to those who might, and do not
With their swords their gold environ !
From the pinnacle of greatness
Cast, like carrion they shall rot !
They shall be a world-wide wonder,
And their place shall know them not.



Now the cuneiform deserting,
In three columns doth he steer ;
And in gallant guise saluteth,
The old Castle of Tangier.
Then outspoke those old twelve pounders,
That had never dealt a blow,
Since they pepper'd Monsieur Joinville,
Twenty-seven long years ago.





IV.

Now the cuneiform deserting,
In three columns doth he steer,
And in gallant guise saluteth
The old castle of Tangier.*
Then spoke out those old twelve-pounders
That had never dealt a blow
Since they pepper'd Monsieur Joinville,
Twenty-seven long years ago.

V.

All in peaceful guise saluting
Childers on his element ;
Happy that no demonstration
'Gainst their honeycombs was meant.

* The bombardment of Tangier took place on the 6th of August, 1844.

Gracefully to seaward sweeps he,
While his Fleet look on and learn :
Fierce it blows, and still more fiercely—
Cape Spartel is left astern—

VI.

Distances are lost, and bearings
Ill kept—so Reporters say ;
And the Caledonia tacking,
Carried first her mizen away,
Follow'd in some fifteen seconds
By the main-top-gallant mast,
Then the fore—which left our Childers
In the Agincourt aghast.

VII.

For the luckless Caledonia
Was a sight to all the Fleet ;
As the wreck hung o'er to leeward
Several fathoms, and some feet.

Great and gaping holes a-many,
Ruthlessly the yard ends tore
In the pitiful main-topsails,
And the miserable fore.

VIII.

And besides all these disasters,
Just at two o'clock precisely,
The Monarch, she miss'd stays twice over,
And no doubt she mull'd it nicely ;
While the Hercules in wearing
Steadily refused the task
Of responding to the questions
That her helm presum'd to ask.

IX.

And the gale increas'd upon him,
And the ' rollers of the Fleet '
Straight perform'd some evolutions
That were reckon'd rather neat.

Royal Oak and Pallas out of
Water roll'd their garboard strakes ;
Let us thank our stars, good people,
We weren't there, for all our sakes.

x.

And they say the Lord High Admiral's
Stately ship the Agincourt
Roll'd twice ten degrees to starboard,
And just twenty-two to port,
In a series of continuous
Swings, and also took in water
Through her main-deck and stern gun-ports,
Giving the poor man no quarter.

xi.

But the longest day is over
When the bird sinks to her rest,
And the longest gale must blow out,
Though it blow like all possest.

Scatter'd, batter'd, pitching, rolling,
Straggling like a flock of geese,
The Fleet opens Belem Castle,
And the day's disasters cease.

XII.

Once again to sea put Childers,
For it doth not yet appear
How he could without so doing
Rendezvous at far Cape Clear.
And the storm he said he'd look for
Came upon him in the bay,
On the eighteenth of September,
In the morning of the day.

XIII.

And the Agincourt so stately
Had to steer her, fifty men :
Fourteen at the helm, the rest at
The relieving tackles, then

At *ten thirty* sharp she shipp'd a
Sea that in a brace of shakes
Sent the ward-room mess a-flying,
Burst the cutter's garboard strakes,

XIV.

Hanging on her starboard davits,
And, as I'm oblig'd to learn,
Drown'd the cabins too, and well nigh
Clear'd the ship from stem to stern.
And it almost seem'd the moment
For 'the High' to steer the ship
Had arriv'd, and show his knowledge
And undoubted seamanship.

XV.

But the wind most opportunely
Moderated, and the Fleet,
Scatter'd o'er a black horizon,
Promptly found the change a treat

Though e'en then, in spite of easement,
Dinner was most difficult ;
And the Lord High Admiral tried it,
With a very lame result.

XVI.

As great Virgil stoops to gossip,
And describes with reverent glee,
How the helmsman got a header
And was wash'd away to sea ;
How the billows this and that ship,
That and this way wildly tost,
With the names of all the galleys,
And the gentlemen were lost*—

* “ Unam, quæ Lycios fidumque vehebat Oronten,
Ipsius ante oculos ingens a vertice pontus
In puppim ferit : excutitur pronusque magister

XVII.

So the bard that Childers' actions
Would trustworthily portray,
Cannot leave the fact unnoticed
How the capstan-bar fetched way
In the storm, and straight proceeded
To divide itself in twain
'Gainst the back of a marine's head,
Who yet lives to fight again.

Volvitur in caput : ast illam ter fluctus ibidem
Torquet agens circum, et rapidus vorat æquore vortex."

Æneidos, lib. i. line 117.

"Et quâ vectus Abas, et quâ grandævus Aletes,
Vicit hiems."

Ibid., line 125.

"Præcipue pius Æneas, nunc acris Oronti,
Nunc Amyci casum gemit, et crudelia secum
Fata Lyci, fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum."

Ibid., line 224.

XVIII.

Happy, happy in a thick head
Wert thou, 'Jolly!' but not so,
In the chapter of misfortunes,
Was thine equally strong toe!
For one of the broken pieces
Cut adrift an arm-rack, sending
Cutlass point into it, which took
Many plasters to the mending.

XIX.

The Northumberland lost two seamen
Overboard, so runs the tale,
And the Hercules was crippled
Up aloft in this fierce gale:
She had sprung her foretop masthead,
Split her trysails fore and aft,
Sprung her main-gaff, and in short she
Look'd a miserable craft.

XX.

Carried away spanker gaff and
Stay, and wash'd away like chaff
Stern hawse plugs, and hand-lead platform
Not to come to grief by half ;
And they say besides, to make her
Situation still more queer
And unchancy, she had got her
Rudder lock'd, and couldn't steer.

XXI.

Then 'twas that the Flying Dutchman,
With each stitch of canvas set,
Came down upon ' Flying Childers,'
Who receiv'd him in a pet ;
And besides us'd such strong language
That he scar'd the phantom sailor,
Who mistook him for rude Boreas,
Whilom styled ' the blust'ring railer.

XXII.

In the meantime where's th' Inconstant ?
She at least is not in sight ;
Is she wreck'd, or run for harbour ?
Has she founder'd in the night ?
Spread o'er eighteen miles off Ushant,
Cruising for her rolls the Fleet ;
But no signals of her safety
To the last the ' look outs ' greet.

XXIII.

And to mend the situation
There set in at five P.M.
A fog thick and dark as pease soup,
That envelop'd all of them.
And they pitch'd and toss'd in darkness
As the very worst they fear'd,
Till with break of day it lifted,
And the Helicon appear'd.

XXIV.

She that had been sent before them
To look out for far Cape Clear ;
And th' Inconstant also turn'd up—
That had fallen in the rear,
Being for the time disabled
In the storm they all had shar'd ;—
There she lays her course amongst them,
With all damages repair'd !

XXV.

Then a joy of large proportions
In the place of Eheu ! Eheu !
Visited the heart of Childers,
And he signall'd—" Glad to see you !"
With his royal standard flying
To Cork harbour came he then ;
And Corkagian gratulations
Were his welcome home again !

XXVI.

And they liken'd him ('the Haythens')
In a sudden loyal burst,
To the 'great Phaynician Captain
That discover'd 'Oireland' first.'
For themselves they ask'd a trifle—
"A new dock or two so neat,
And that Cork might be the station
For the whole 'United Fleet.'

XXVII.

But he said, "Avast there, messmates,
I can't promise on like this,
Lest, though I be High, one Higher,
Mr. Gladstone, think't amiss!
There's a virtue hight 'discretion,'
That men's modesty replaces—
Mayor of Cork, I think I miss it
In the schedule of your graces."

XXVIII.

So he bow'd the great Corkagian
Deputation to the door,
And pass'd forward to his captains
The grim word—"Admit no more."
Then their spouses caught the sailors,
Fondly, to their gracious arms,
And 'tis said, no more will Childers
Tempt the rabid sea's alarms!

L'Envoi.

XXIX.

Gentles all, this is the story
Of our Childers bold and free ;
This the record of his progress
And his faithful log at sea !

Don't believe in all reporters—
They're forsooth a reckless tribe,
Muzzing, buzzing, prying, lying,
Given to gloze, and apt to jibe.

xxx.

But for this historic notice
See the ' Letters in the Times
From our Hero's own Reporter ;'—
I've but done them into rhymes.
I, the least of all the poets,
That so ruthlessly bestride
Pegasus like Martin Tupper,
And to death or glory ride.

THE END.

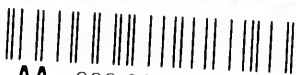


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